

# THE STATE OF THE ART OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PUEBLO RICO RISARALDA

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## Resumen

El presente estudio fue desarrollado con el fin de completar el primer paso del proyecto La Ordenanza, el cual corresponde a diagnosticar el estado del arte de la enseñanza del inglés en once regiones de Risaralda. De este modo, la presente investigación tuvo lugar en Pueblo Rico, donde diferentes datos relacionados con la metodologías de clase, recursos institucionales, antecedentes académicos de los profesores, y la percepción de los estudiantes hacia la práctica del inglés fueron recolectados con el fin de identificar cual es el manejo adoptado en el pueblo en el área de inglés.

Los resultados indican que los estudiantes suelen usar la traducción como una práctica constante en las clases, al igual que una creciente desmotivación para aprender inglés. Respecto al plan de clases, su diseño depende exclusivamente de la autonomía del profesor, con una flexible regulación en la aplicación de los Estándares de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras (El Reto). Finalmente, el estudio indica varios aspectos a fortalecer respecto a la práctica del inglés y el impacto que estos tienen en el desarrollo de una segunda lengua en los estudiantes. De este modo, esto corresponde al diagnóstico elaborado en este pueblo.

**Palabras clave:** Inglés, enseñanza, aprendizaje, procedimientos, estándares, percepciones.

## **Abstract**

The present study was developed in order to accomplish the first step of La Ordenanza policy, as it corresponds to diagnose the state of language teaching in eleven regions of Risaralda. In this way, the current research took place in Pueblo Rico town, where different data related with classroom methodologies, institutional resources, teacher's academic background, and students' perceptions towards the practice of English was collected in order to identify which is the management adopted by the town in the English area.

The results indicate that students are used to practicing translation as a major exercise in classes, as well as an increasing demotivation to learning English. In terms of class planning, its design relies exclusively in the teacher's autonomy with slight regulation in the application of Standards of Competences (Guide 22). Finally, the study indicates several aspects to reinforce regarding the practice of English and the impact they have on the student's foreign language development. Thus, this corresponds to the diagnosis of this town.

**Keywords:** English, teaching, learning, procedures, standards, perceptions.

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## Table of Contents

1. Statement of the problem.....	8
2. Research questions.....	11
3. Theoretical framework.....	12
4. Methodology.....	24
4.1. Type of study.....	24
4.2. Context and setting.....	24
4.3. Participants.....	25
4.4. Role of the researchers.....	25
4.5. Data collection.....	26
4.6. Data analysis.....	27
4.7. Ethical considerations.....	29
5. Findings and discussion.....	30
5.1. Language teaching models.....	30
5.1.1. Learner-centered language instruction through classroom cooperative corrections and pronunciation practices.....	30
5.1.2. Supporting use of materials and recycling previous knowledge to contextualize input.....	33
5.2. Use of Spanish and role of translation in the practice of English.....	35
5.2.1. The use of Spanish and its role within the practice of English.....	36
5.2.2. Role of translation in the practices of the classroom.....	39
5.3. Academic community's perceptions towards language teaching.....	41

5.3.1. Students' perspectives of the practice of English.....	42
5.3.2. Teacher and coordinators perspectives of language teaching.....	46
6. Research and pedagogical implications.....	51
7. Limitations of the study.....	54
8. Conclusions.....	56
9. References.....	59
Appendix 1.....	62
Appendix 2.....	63
Appendix 3.....	67
Appendix 4.....	68

## 1. Statement of the Problem

The importance of learning a foreign language is widespread in today's world, placing a person that uses a foreign language at a higher level of social, cultural and cognitive development. This fact is made evident in *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL)* which is a guideline used to describe the achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries. The Council of Europe, through this document, intends to promote the interaction and communication between countries to enrich co-operation and decrease the prejudice and discrimination.

Due to the latest challenges of the English teaching field, teaching and learning a foreign language has become an issue of great significance in our country. Hence, different attempts have been made with the purpose of keeping up with these current challenges and giving response to the actual needs of the citizens. Based on the fact that English can create more competent people, who can be part of the growth, development and evolution of the country (CEFR), Colombia has implemented a number of projects in order to achieve higher levels of English competence. Namely, the construction of the Bilingual Plan, the design of the Basic Standards of Competences of Foreign languages, the publication of La Ordenanza Policy, the implementation of training programs for both teachers and students, among others.



According to the Ministry of Education (MEN), teaching English in Colombia has evolved over the past ten years, and many people from all social status have been in the process of either learning, teaching or assessing the efficiency of the language. The Ministry of Education developed the new standards of competences based on the CEFR, and this entity also formulated the National Bilingual Program which main aim is create citizens who are capable of communicating in English, allowing them to improve their quality of life and making them more competitive in the national and international contexts.

In consideration of the goals and the programs promoted by the National Bilingual Program, the department of Risaralda has created the educational public policy called “Risaralda Bilingüe” (La Ordenanza) which was formulated in 2011, by the Secretary of Education in Risaralda. This policy intends to promote the use of English as a foreign language in the region with the intention of raising a population with the appropriate competences to be part of the globalized world. More specifically, La Ordenanza proposes as its main objective to improve the teaching and learning of English in Risaralda, by presenting a project that includes a strategic plan, goals and indicators that will be the parameters to construct a bilingual region.

The aforementioned Project reports on a set of results that evidence the low performance in English of eleventh graders in the ICFES test in Risaralda. The statistics show that approximately the 45% of these students reaches an A1- level while the 1.6% of them reaches a B1 level according to the standards proposed by the CEFR. These standards present a series of increasing level for describing

learners' proficiency that arrange between and A1 to a C2. Similarly, the program "Colombia Bilingüe" conveys some statistics related to the English level of language teachers in the country. Data provided in the webpage exhibit that about the 65% of the teachers are placed as basic users of the language (Pre A1, A1 and A2) according to the CEFR. The previous results are presented in order to establish the importance of conducting a project that first, sheds light on the needs in terms of English instruction and second, unfolds the actions, perceptions, and evidences of the English teaching in state Schools in Risaralda.

In view of the statistics that evidence the actual situation of both teachers and students, the government and the Secretary of Education have been training English language teachers. Some of the entities and institutions in charge of this training are Universidad Libre, Universidad Católica, Centro de Idiomas, Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras (ILEX). In relation to the students, there is a program called Scholar Extended Time (JEEX) which provides the opportunity to the students of the non-certificated towns to be part of an English program. In 2010 there were 330 students favored from the program, in 2011 there are 2430 students already involved in the process.

This study intends to give response to the first stage of the Risaralda bilingual project which attempts to represent and describe the realities of the English teaching in public institutions, with the purpose of establishing a reference that will contribute to the development of the next phases of the project Risaralda Bilingüe. Consequently, this study will contribute to reveal, expose and report on behaviors, strategies and procedures implemented in Pueblo Rico, a

correspondent town which is listed in the 11 English uncertified regions in Risaralda. The importance of the present study will serve as a diagnosis for further stages in the process, together with the studies performed on the other eleven listed towns. In other words, this study will inform readers about the actions, methods, techniques, perceptions and challenges used in the English language teaching contexts in Risaralda.

## **2. Research questions**

In order to complete the study, the following questions are presented:

1. Which are the teaching models implemented in Pueblo Rico, Risaralda?
2. What are academic community's perceptions towards English Language Teaching?

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Foreign language learning has become a priority in Colombia. For that reason, the Ministry of Education (MEN) elaborated the project “*Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en las Lenguas Extranjeras*” which intends to raise the level of quality in English teaching , and consequently, attaining the certification of quality for such institutions and programs. Lastly, this project aims to locate citizens at a high level of competitiveness and achieve a better quality of life, not only in Colombia, but also in other countries.

Attempting to set up common indicators of what students are intended to achieve in the learning of English of Colombian schools, MEN released the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*, a guide which emphasizes on the procedures and objectives to achieve regarding the present language learning requirements.

#### **Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés.**

Responding to the purpose from the cited project, MEN designed a textbook that lays out standards for the teaching of English in state schools. This textbook, has as a main goal the development of the different communicative abilities involving the linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic competence among others. The standards are described for each grade from 1<sup>st</sup> to higher education, specifying the level that students should reach at the end of each grade or program.

The basic standards in foreign languages competences seek to balance the English teaching and learning in Colombian schools. In addition, having standards offers Colombia the opportunity to reach international levels of attainment, as well as to compare and introduce international parameters into the local educational context. For the establishing of Colombian standards, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages served as benchmark (MEN, 2006).

Even though the purpose in Colombia is to achieve a proper fluency in English, the implementation of standards is still in reinforcement. In spite of this, Sanchez & Obando (2008) argue that the implementation of standards in Colombia requires to be addressed, especially when there are institutions where the English schedule is less than four hours, and even seems not to exist. On the other hand, the teaching of English is welcome in Colombia, but there is a lack of clearness about the way to optimize the conditions in order to achieve educational goals. In the case of standards, there is a lack of regulation in its applicability. (Cardenas, cited by Sanchez & Obando, 2008)

## **Method**

A method is defined as “a single set of theoretical principles derived from feeder disciplines and a single set of classroom procedures directed at classroom teachers” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Drawing from Cook (1989), a method is a prescriptive concept that articulates a positivist and patriarchal understanding of teaching. Within the nature of the classroom, the method is important since by

means of this one, the teacher transmits his/her knowledge to the students, as well as also to reach the aims proposed in the subject.

Although methods have existed for many years, some have been implemented and, afterwards, improved or substituted. That is why Brown, Clarke, Freeman, McArthur and Richards (1986) argue that there has been a series of language teaching methods over the years, each being succeeded when a better one appears. However, some methods or their characteristics still hold sway nowadays. In consideration, Kelly (1969 cited by Cook, 1989) suggests that "nobody really knows what is new or old in present- day language teaching procedures".

Some prominent methods pinpointed by Murcia (2001) are: Silent way, Community Language Learning, or Total Physical Response as well. Conversely, Prabhu (2001) considers that there is not a best method as it depends on factors as the purpose and the circumstances; in other words, the context.

## **Approach**

Throughout decades of teaching and learning foreign languages, diverse theories have come into view as a way of conducting teachers in the field of second or foreign language teaching. Nonetheless, language teaching and learning have implied relevant changes through the implementation of new policies in the way language is taught. Richards & Rodgers (cited by Brown, 2000) denotes that "an approach defines assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and language learning". However, Murcia (2001) argues that teachers

are not aware of the bases and roots of language teaching. Consequently, the teachers perform their classes with personal beliefs rather than theoretical foundation, and this is the primarily reason why this concept must be included in this project.

Some of these theories make part of a very general term denominated approach, which along with Edward Anthony's (cited by Richards & Rogers, 2001) words, is a series of theories that serve as a basis of practices and resources for language teaching. Furthermore, Harmer (2001) states that "an approach describes how people acquire their knowledge of the language and makes statements about the conditions which will promote successful language learning".

An approach then, displays specific assumptions and beliefs on language and language learning (Anthony 1963; cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Wrapping up the conception of approach, Murcia (2001) defines it as a "theory" and names. Some approaches are: Grammar-translation, reading, audio lingual, oral-situational, direct, and communicative.

Some approaches present clear limitations. It is the case of the grammar-translation approach, which main purpose is to translate textual paragraphs from one language to another (Murcia, 2001). Atkinson (1987) denotes that translation use to be one of the favored learning strategies in second language learners. In addition, Stoddart (2000) denotes that it is unavoidable for language students to translate into L1 as it is an inevitable process in learning a second language. However, further attention is given in writing and little emphasis on speaking, and

Murcia (2001) considers grammar-translation limitation in terms of little use of L2 for communication. For that reason, the learner is fluent in writing or reading, but is limited in listening or speaking.

In addition, an approach is based on premises about theory of language, and the nature of language learning. Both concepts are deemed important for further illustration.

### **Theory of language**

As this theory is derived from the approach, Anthony (1963; cited by Richards & Rogers, 2001) refers to the structural view, which consists of a series of elements integrated in a system which allows creating meaning. This system is generally unified by elements such as phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations, and lexical items. The second is the functional view which is more focused in the message function rather than the form. Finally, an interactional view promotes the language as a fundamental tool that helps people to be involved in interpersonal relations. In other words, the only mechanism in charge of the development of interactional patterns in people is the language.

This view in terms of teaching may be seen as a vehicle of interaction between learners. As follows, Richards & Rodgers (2001) states that through interaction not only listeners but also speakers can increase their language thanks to authentic linguistic material. It is needless to say that interaction plays an essential role in the theories of second language learning; specially, when interactivity is directly connected to the four language skills (reading, writing,



listening speaking). Nevertheless, language interaction has not been structured like other models of language teaching. Besides, language teaching models also need to be complemented by theories of learning.

Similarly, Krashen (1988) distinguishes a theory which consists of five main hypotheses, namely, the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis. All of these hypotheses try to explain how the language is acquired or learned. Nevertheless, the most widely accepted hypothesis by linguists and language practitioners is the Acquisition Learning Hypothesis, which is explained by Krashen (1988) in terms of two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. In other words, the acquired system is the product of a subconscious process of development of the language, similar to the way children acquired their mother tongue. On the other hand, the learned system is more focused on a conscious study of the language.

Other hypothesis that is considered relevant is the input hypotheses that consist on supporting students with much comprehensible input which means providing students meaningful input through scaffolding.

### **Theory of language learning**

Throughout the history of teaching, different perspectives and methods have emerged as a way of providing new basis for the development of the language. In other words, guiding the language in learning and the way it is taught. Furthermore, it allows having several angles to lead the language in process such as the Monitor

Model of second language development, the Natural Approach, the Total physical response, and the Silent Way. These last derive from the theory of language learning.

Krashen (1988) claims two relevant concepts which are Acquisition and Learning. Firstly, acquisition refers to the spontaneous and unconscious process to internalize new knowledge, while Learning is a conscious process in which formal teaching is necessary. According to Krashen (1981) the Monitor works as the central and conscious part of grammatical rules about the language that is learned. It is important to add that the Monitor only occur in learning and not in acquisition. In addition, learners perceive when and how consciously make corrections to the learning process.

Finally, the Silent Way proposed by Gattenno (1972) states that learner should have control of the language when the learner feels secure and assume a conscious process of it. Much of this method is branded by a Problem-solving approach to learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) gives an overview of this learning which emphasizes that learning is accomplished if the learner have the opportunity to discover and create rather than remember each piece of language knowledge.

In terms of the roles of L1 in the learning of L2, Atkinson (1987) argues that instructions in L1 diminish the amount of time to complete any specific session aim and checking comprehension, and becomes easier than visual representations as physical mimes or visual aids. On the other hand, Kavaliauskienė (2010) mention

the usage of L1 in switching, which is considered important for the development of interlanguage in the classroom. However, the author states that its main disadvantage is a tendency to think in L1 rather than in L2, even at an advanced level.

## **Design**

Within the nature of method, design is a key component in the development of educational resources. As stated by Friedman (2003), design is the entire process where many variables are involved and required to any specific outcome. In addition, the nature of design in education is described by Richards & Rodgers (2001) as the level of method analysis where objectives, content choice, and roles of teachers and students are analyzed in order to achieve an instructional system. The standards stated in *Formar en Lenguas Extranjeras ¡el reto!* is an example of an instructional material from which curriculum and syllabi would be based on. In this way and following the Richards & Rodgers' sequence, the focus of a method is highly influenced by theories of language and language learning, and once the aspiration of the method is clearly defined, the product of design concerns the specification of determined learning objectives. Thus, these elements are used to the development and organization of classes, curriculum, and consequently, the syllabus.

## **Roles of teachers and students**

The roles of teachers and students are explained in terms of processes. In the case of learners, Johnson & Paulston (cited by Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

proposes an autonomous focused theory from which learners stride through different stages, where they design their own learning program and are responsible about the current development and progress of their own process, as they belong and learn from a group where other participants are involved. Moreover, Curran (cited by Richards & Rodgers, 2001) adds a more intrinsic focus by stating a first stage where the student is entirely dependent on the teacher, and a final stage where autonomy is accomplished.

Emphasizing on the roles of teachers and students, the teacher is usually related with administrative roles, in spite of the fact that some methods are dependent on the teacher performance. A historical method as the audio lingual is an example of the previous mentioned fact. In addition, the teacher has the autonomy to determine the content of learning, as well as providing the communication space between facilitator and students (Richards & Rodgers, 2001. P. 28).

Regarding the classroom nature, Richards (2006) underline the roles of the learners within procedural routines as participation in activities, and cooperative interaction within a communicative language teaching approach. In addition, Miller & Peterson (2002) considers that cooperative learning experiences supports the student production as it is also centered on reinforcing the learners' perception towards the nature of the class. On the other hand, Harmer (1998) considers that initial participation in groups helps students to reduce anxiety to participate, which comes from a fear to commit mistakes in front of an audience. Besides, Harmer (2001) agrees that students' self-assessment supports autonomy as the nature of

knowledge is reflected, as well as feedback supports the awareness about the learners learning process.

### **Teacher-centered and learner-centered approach**

Concerning the classroom management, there are two identifiable classroom management approaches as they are teacher-centered and learner-centered. To begin with, the learner-centered approach is described by Campbell & Kryszevska (1992) as certain practices performed by using students' knowledge within activities they have to develop in the classroom. On the contrary, the teacher-centered approach deals with the learning and teaching through the teacher as the main attention point (Weimer, 2009). Likewise, Huba & Freed (2012) conclude that in a teacher-centered model, knowledge is transmitted from teacher to student, while in a learner-centered model students are to construct their own knowledge. In other words, a learner-centered approach influences on a more significant knowledge for the students as this emphasizes on the students procedures rather than a final product as it is used to be expected in a teacher-centered approach (Huba & Freed, 2012).

### **Role of motivation in students**

The motivation of a student to learn, or the students perspectives towards the nature of the language in class plays an important role in their learning. In consideration, Harmer (1998) and Gardner & Lambert (cited by Lightbown & Spada, 2008) divides motivation in two concepts: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to learning for personal growth, and instrumental

refers to learning for practical goals. Lightbown & Spada (2008) denotes that external pressure influences on negative attitudes towards the learning of a second language. At contrary, learning for personal motivation facilitates the learning process of the learner.

The classroom environment and the way the input is presented influences on any of the previous types of motivation. Du (2009) considers that learners with a positive attitude towards L2 learning learn easier and rapid in comparison with those with a negative perception. O'Sullivan (2008) agrees that "unmotivated students are insufficiently involved; they are unable to develop their language skills to potential." Thus, a negative perspective represents a disadvantage as there is little cooperation to learn.

Emphasizing on the classroom nature, MacLeod & Larsson(2009) argue that students avoid L2 practice outside the classroom when they are not aware and even find impractical the input received in class into their daily life. Lightbown & Spada (2008) explains that it occurs when lessons are developed through constant repetition of routines, patterns, and formats.

### **Role of materials in contextualization**

The use of materials represents a crucial aspect in the classroom. In terms of design, Richards & Rodgers (2001) agree that instructional materials outline the achievement of learning objectives. In the classroom nature, Crawford (2002) agrees that materials allow both teacher and students to learn further from verbal and non-verbal communication. The textbook as a classroom material is described

by Crawford (2002) as a structuring tool as it provides a sequence and predictability regarding the input.

One of the roles of materials deals with contextualizing meanings. Rivet & Krajcik (2008) denotes that “contextualizing instruction focuses student’s attention on the interrelationships between concepts.” In spite of this, Richards & Rodgers (2001) indicates that instructional materials must be understandable, must allow different learning styles, provide opportunity for self-evaluation, and consequently, to allow the learner to progress according to its learning development. In addition, Rivet & Krajcik (2008) indicate that contextualizing requires taking real-world examples already known by the students. Thus, materials are helpful to contextualize if the main objective of the class is to connect the input with any concept or previous knowledge from the learner.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Type of study**

The current study was developed through qualitative procedures. Firstly, through qualitative method the researchers intend to collect data related to teachers' beliefs, thoughts about their teaching practice, and also students' attitudes and behaviors about teachers' performance in the classroom. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative studies involve constructing theory and are highly reflective. In addition, Ray (2011) describes qualitative studies as one of the used methods to observe and record the actions and behaviors of determined participants or individuals through the course. Therefore, the data collection was done in a natural setting, in other words the classroom to gather information of the realities of English language teachers' face in the public institutions of Risaralda, and reporting on a study that represents the academic realities from different standpoints.

### **4.2. Context and setting**

The current research project corresponds to the study of an institution of Pueblo Rico, which makes part of the non-certified places mentioned in La Ordenanza policy. The mentioned project was carried out in eleven towns in Risaralda such as, Apia, Balboa, Belen de Umbria, Guatica, La Celia, La Virginia, Marsella, Mistrato, Pueblo Rico, Quinchia, Santa Rosa de Cabal and Santuario.

This research project was mainly concentrated on the English language teachers and students from Pueblo Rico. Therefore, the study was focused in



teachers from secondary education within 6<sup>th</sup> through 11th grades, school academic coordinators, and high school students.

#### **4.3. Participants**

The first participants for this study were the English teachers from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11th grades from Pueblo Rico as they are in charge of aspects as the planning of lessons. The secondary participants of this study were the academic coordinators that belong to Pueblo Rico and who provided relevant information related with: How English is incorporated in the PEI, the current or future projects the institution is promoting in terms of English language learning, and also the methodology the school is encouraging to English language teachers to implement in their class.

The last of the participants are the students, who presented the most important information about their learning process, their opinions about language learning and teaching, and what they evidenced in terms of their teachers' performance in the classroom. In consideration, the participants' selection corresponds to a purposive sample procedure (Merriam, 2009), in which the nature of a qualitative study implies to understand a phenomenon since the participants interpretations.

#### **4.4. Role of the researchers**

The role of the researchers were performed as a non-participant observation, which is defined by Freeman and Long (1991) as the act that implies observing, taking notes and recording activities without taking part of them. In other words, in Pueblo Rico there were two researchers that acted as non-participant

observers. Therefore, the researcher did not interact with the learners or interfered in the class, but observed meticulously.

#### **4.5. Data collection**

Qualitative data collection forms were implemented to gather the required information. As the purpose of this study was to collect data related to educator teaching methodologies, perceptions and actions of the academic community in Pueblo Rico, the following data collection instruments were employed as follows (see Appendixes 2, 3, and 4):

##### **Questionnaires**

As defined by Herbert (1989), questionnaires are physical data evidence related with questions in which the person is expected to respond anonymously. Consequently, questionnaires were used to collect data from English teachers and coordinators from Pueblo Rico. This information deals with academic's community background in aspects as professional development, methodology and lesson plan design, bibliographic knowledge, and personal perspectives regarding the English students performance. Therefore, the participants involved were surveyed in order to obtain deeper information about the personal and professional experiences in the process of teaching English. This survey was structured and implemented at the beginning of the study (see appendix 2).

## **Observation**

According to Merriam (2009), observation involves the complete analysis of people's behavior, perceptions and assimilations to acquire data from the field that is under research. Furthermore, the observation in this study was performed in two sessions from two different grades. Each observation lasted one hour per class and was arranged by non-participants, who focused on taking field notes using a structured format. The collected data was taken from different aspects as the classroom environment, use of languages, instructional procedures, interaction patterns, among others (see appendix 3).

## **Interviews**

In Bhamani's (2007) words, "interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way to collect data from individuals through conversations". Thus, the interviews were arranged with two students from each grade, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> graders. The interview protocol was composed of nine questions all related with students' personal experiences regarding the English practices in Pueblo Rico. In addition, all of the interviews were recorded in order to transcribe them afterwards. Consequently, the main purpose is to collect data taking into account the students perceptions about their learning process of English (see appendix 4).

### **4.6. Data analysis**

After the complete collection of data, the information from questionnaires and interviews was totally transcribed. This transcription came from the written

answered questionnaires from the English teacher and coordinator, the recorded interviews from the students, and written classroom observations. As defined by Merriam (2009), this aligns with a first step within the grounded theory procedures, where after making a transcription of collected data, then it is proceeded to compare one unit of data with another one, and as defined by the author, a grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses which relates both categories and properties. In this way, we had to transcribe literally all the collected data in order to follow with the coding and making the categorizations.

Once the information was completely transcribed, we proceed with the coding. The first step was naming the sources. For instance, each participant and questions were numbered as well as the observations. Secondly, the information was underlined with different colors, each one of them representing a different aspect or commonality. Afterwards, the next step was grouping the information according to their commonality represented with a specific color. Finally, we narrowed the data by triangulating the information from our three data sources as they were the interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The last step consisted of providing a name to the obtained categories. With these obtained categories, we presented the samples and its correspondent interpretations. These interpretations were discussed with other authors' ideas in order to provide a further analysis of this information and avoid subjective analyses.

#### **4.7. Ethical considerations**

Some ethical considerations were considered in order to collect the information and protect the participants' identity and interests. In the case of Pueblo Rico, the academic community was previously informed about the project through a letter provided by the Risaralda government, and from which they accepted the terms and conditions (see Appendix 1). This letter described the purpose of the study as its objective looks for improving the practice of English in Risaralda. Hence, the nature of the project was explained and permission was asked in order to collect data through interviews, observations, and questionnaires. This consent was obtained from the school principal and academic coordination. Therefore, obtaining written consent from the coordinators and principals of the school was necessary, due to the sensitive nature of the study. The data collection took place during school hours with previous permission, and also the identity of the participants was totally protected.

## 5. Findings and discussion

### 5.1. Language teaching procedures

The current finding deals with the different language teaching models involved along the structure of the classes. In this way, the finding is divided in two categories, where the first emphasizes on the practices implemented in terms of activities and interaction in the classroom. The second focuses on the role of materials within the contextualization of students' knowledge with the class topic.

#### 5.1.1. Learner-centered language instruction through classroom cooperative corrections and pronunciation practices

Regarding the English classes, the data evidences that learner-centered models are current as most of the examples are designed by the learners and mistakes correction is given cooperatively within students and teacher. Thus, the data indicates an environment with sequenced roles as the students are able to participate actively, not only in terms of written work, but also in cooperation with others.

**O1P2** -*La profesora permite que los estudiantes corrijan los ejemplos de sus compañeros...producción de ejercicios elaborada por los estudiantes en el tablero...la profesora pide por voluntarios para salir al tablero a escribir sus ejemplos.*

**O2P2** - *Los estudiantes son divididos en grupos los cuales deben elegirse un nombre con el fin de que cada grupo pase a cantar un fragmento de la canción y ganar puntos...Si la pronunciación del grupo que salga a cantar es insatisfactoria, los demás compañeros del grupo lo manifiestan al decir ``fuera, fuera, fuera!'`.*

Learner-centered approach is described by Campbell & Kryszewska (1992) as those activities developed by using students' knowledge within activities they have to perform in the classroom. Hence, the preceding sample indicates that corrections are in charge of both teacher and students, and their previous knowledge about pronunciation allowed them to indicate when a certain group was mispronouncing any part of the song. In other words, previous pronunciation knowledge of the students was used; something considered characterizing the learner-centered approach.

Correspondingly, the teacher is not the main agent of knowledge as she allowed their students to elaborate their own exercises and to write them voluntarily on the whiteboard. In addition, the students are required to correct their classmates' exercises when it is necessary. This aligns with the Harmer (2001) argue in the fact that he states that students' self-assessment supports autonomy as they are required to reflect upon the nature of knowledge, something that is expected in a learner-centered classroom nature, and which is evidenced in the aforementioned sample. In addition, the author adds that understanding of the feedback supports the awareness about the learners learning process.

As indicated in observation 2, team work is not only a learner-centered activity, but it also stimulates to work cooperatively to achieve any specific aim, in this case, the pronunciation of a song. Hence, Miller & Peterson (2002) argue that cooperative learning experiences reinforces the student production as it is also focused on improving learners' perception towards the nature of the class. Thus, the learner-centered production is prominent through cooperative work and group

correction of mistakes. Besides, the protocol used by the teacher demonstrates a sequenced and organized way in terms of pronunciation feedback, a relevant aspect emphasized in the following sample:

**S2Q3:** *“la profesora es muy buena explicando porque siempre coge una actividad por ejemplo como el verbo to-be. Primero lo decimos todos, después por filas, y después lo saca uno por uno y le explica muy bien”.*

The previous sample denotes that pronunciation practice takes place through repetition. In other words, the students repeat pronunciation after the teacher. However, it is remarkable that the pronunciation activities structure is not always the same. As described by Student 2, the practice in terms of pronunciation starts by an initial general pronunciation, then small groups of students pronounce, and finally, each student is required to do it without partners. In the next sample it is evident a first step in the pronunciation procedure previously mentioned.

**O1P2:** *Por medio de un video karaoke, la profesora presenta la letra sin audio a los estudiantes. El procedimiento consiste en que la profesora lee la letra a medida que esta va saliendo en el video y los estudiantes repiten la pronunciación una vez la profesora les indica que repitan después de ella... Los estudiantes cantan en coro junto a ella una vez han visto el video karaoke con el audio de la canción*

Although the observation 2 evidences a first step as described above, it describes a different pronunciation structure containing the same sequence described by the Student 2. To specify, the teacher started by presenting the lyrics of the song to her students; afterwards, the students repeated the pronunciation after the teacher; and finally, the whole group and the teacher sing according to the song rhythm. In Harmer (1998) words, initial participation in groups helps students to reduce anxiety to participate, which is generated from a fear to commit mistakes



in front of an audience. Besides, Miller & Peterson (2002) suggest that cooperative learning experiences reinforces the students' perception towards the class as it is emphasized on the students' production. Subsequently, the main difference was not just in terms of material usage, but also in terms of engaging. In other words, the pronunciation model was the song and not mainly the teacher.

### **5.1.2. Supporting use of materials and recycling previous knowledge to contextualize input**

Within the strong aspects of the language teaching models, we found that the classroom content is based on related previous knowledge of the students. As a way of contextualization, the sessions are connected with physical aspects within the classroom, which are used to provide examples. In addition, aspects as recycling of previous knowledge are used in order to strengthen the understanding of information from the students.

**S3Q2:** *“el libro de Inglés (Leíto Inglés as described in S3Q1) y un video beam para escuchar música...bueno pa' escuchar una música ahí...Titanic... el video beam para ver digamos videos donde hablen el Inglés para una canción en Inglés”*

**S10Q2:** *“...también el computador con el video beam para ver digamos videos donde hablen el Inglés, para una canción en Inglés para después traducirla y pronunciarla bien, cantada”*

As described by the students 3 and 10, the classroom counts on different materials as they are a textbook and a video beam to watch musical content. Even though there is a general description about the materials used in class, the next sample illustrates how the video beam was used in the observed sessions.

**O2P2:** *Por medio de un video karaoke la profesora presenta la letra sin audio a los estudiantes. En cada respectiva pausa, la profesora pregunta a los estudiantes sobre vocabulario de la canción que es familiar para ellos...*

**O1P2:** *La profesora da ejemplos con elementos contextuales del salón de clase e invita a los estudiantes para hacer ejercicios similares en el tablero. Una forma de contextualizar fue tomando elementos visuales presentes en el aula. Por ejemplo, la profesora accede a presentar el uso del demonstrative “There is” tomando al observador (uno de nosotros) como ejemplo*

In Pueblo Rico's institute, the video beam is frequently used in the classroom aside from the textbook. In observation 2, multimedia materials were presented through this institutional resource, and the students are asked about known vocabulary related with the song. In contrast, the video beam was not used during the observation 1, but denoted that the classroom environment objects were used to provide grammar examples. As underlined in the samples, the main aspect both observations share in common is the fact that contextualization was given.

Concerning the contextualization nature, Rivet & Krajcik (2008) argue that “contextualizing instruction focuses student’s attention on the interrelationships between concepts.” In addition, the authors approve that contextualizing requires taking real-world examples already known by the students. Consequently, when the examples in observation 1 are taken from visual objects of the classroom and previous vocabulary knowledge is recycled as in observation 2, then we assume that learners were contextualized with something already known to them. In other words, previous knowledge was connected with new input through contextual situations. On the other hand, the next sample indicates the impact this contextualization had on two students.

***O1P2:*** *Dos estudiantes cerca del observador decían entre ellos los mismos ejemplos pero con diferentes objetos. Estos no fueron socializados.*

A remarkable aspect was the autonomy from two students who were practicing the input. In this way, during the time of writing own examples to expose in the whiteboard, the described students were speaking orally with contextual elements of the classroom. It suggests that the students did understand the input and were practicing according to the class model based on contextualizing with real objects. Conversely, Harmer (1998) indicates this type of classroom performance in terms of integrative motivation, which explains the way the students feel integrated within a context rather than learning to a specific end, which is an instrumental motivation type. In consideration, the cited students were autonomous to practice with the same contextualization classroom model, as it was an understandable model to follow, even when it was not required by the teacher.

## **5.2. Use of Spanish and role of translation in the practice of English**

This finding describes the administration that both languages receive in the English class. As follows, the first category deals with the use of Spanish as a mode to facilitate the interaction between the teacher and students, as well as a proper classroom behavior management. The second category is related with the role of English in translation practices as it was constantly cited by the students, as well as its benefits in the students' personal practice.

### 5.2.1 The use of Spanish and its role within the practice of English

In accordance with the collected data, the participants argued that the English classes are developed with a constant use of Spanish. Besides, some students mentioned that there is a tendency to use Spanish rather than English in the interaction with the teacher or other classmates. Hence, the collected data suggests that the use of Spanish also takes place in misbehavior attention calling in the class, giving of instructions, correcting mistakes, and introducing the grammatical aspect of the lesson as well.

**O1P4.** *-La profesora explica y hace un dictado sobre el uso de las reglas gramaticales de los demostrativos. Esto lo hace en español...Posteriormente, la profesora pide por voluntarios para salir al tablero a escribir sus ejemplos. También lo hace en español por medio de instrucciones como “¿quién quiere salir a escribir sus ejemplos?”*

**O2P4.** *...Cuando se pide leer la canción, cuando se pregunta por vocabulario conocido, cuando se hacen llamados de atención y cuando se pide conformar grupos para cantar se hace usando la lengua materna. Cada corrección en pronunciación se da por medio de instrucciones en Español.*

In the previous sample, it is perceived the use of Spanish to provide instructions, correcting of mistakes, and leading grammar patterns. This situation suggests that the giving of instructions in Spanish is a strategy used by the teacher, especially when she does a literal grammar rules dictation in L1. As observed in the sessions, instruction in Spanish reflects a need to confirm understanding or eliciting, for that reason corrections are achieved in this language. In consideration, Atkinson (1987) explains that instructions in L1 are used since they reduce the amount of time to accomplish any specific session aim,

consume less time in terms of checking comprehension, and consequently, less time is used in comparison with visual aids as physical mimes. Thus, L1 is used in order to facilitate the classroom management in terms of time or giving of instructions. In addition, Spanish is the main language used for interaction between students, and English is mainly employed by the teacher as evidenced in the next sample.

**S7Q6:** *“pues...al llegar de la clase se saluda en Inglés...ehm...en algunas explicaciones se utiliza el Inglés, y ya la mayoría como llama la atención al estudiante siempre ha sido en Español...el único que habla en Inglés es el profesor y todos nosotros somos Español.”*

The previous sample indicates that participants are aware about the contrast around the use of Spanish regarding the English employment. Moreover, this participant argued that students tend to speak in Spanish, and the following sample emphasizes on how both English and Spanish are used in the classroom.

**S9Q6:** *“las dos cosas, pero más que todo en Español, pero se utilizan de los dos modos, en Inglés y en Español, pero entre los compañeros en Español...casi no se usa (el Inglés), ósea lo que le coloca a uno en el tablero y lo que ella habló en Inglés y le explicó a uno y ya, pero ya de resto más que todo en Español.”*

As explained by Student 7, some input of the class involves the use of English, but the teacher is the only user of L2. In addition, Student 9 provides a similar answer where a prominent use of Spanish is given through the communication between students. In contrast with the previous finding, an over-active practice of the teacher, in contrast to the students' production, is considered by Bennett et al (2010) as a teacher-centered approach, especially when the Student 9 and 7 argue that the teacher is the only one who speaks in English, and

the students English production rely on activities as the written forms on the whiteboard. In other words, when the teacher is the main user model of English instead the students, suggests being a teacher-centered aspect, even when the activities present learner-centered aspects as presented in the finding above. On the other hand, even though these students declare the teacher as the main user of L2, the next sample suggests that English is used within the vocabulary in L2, but even the teacher interact with others in Spanish.

**O1P4:** *La profesora explica y hace un dictado sobre uso de las reglas gramaticales de los demostrativos en español...La interacción entre profesor y estudiantes se da por medio de la lengua materna al igual que la interacción entre compañeros de clase. Los estudiantes preguntan sobre sus dudas o piden que se les explique nuevamente en español.*

**S8Q6:** *“Ella habla los dos idiomas, ósea como...ella explica en Español pero llega y saluda en Inglés y dice así palabras en Inglés...”*

As mentioned above, the teacher interacts and explains the topic of the class in Spanish. Consequently, the mother tongue is used for instructions, asking for order in the class, interaction between students, interaction among teacher and students; and English is current through grammar patterns of constant use as the greetings in L2 or written structures in the board. However, sudden changes from one language to another takes place in the presentation of any topic in the class.

**S11Q6:** *“Eh...el Inglés, ella nos hace preguntas a nosotros en Inglés y nosotros le debemos traducir en Español o muchas veces pregunta en Español y le traducimos al Inglés...nosotros hablamos entre Inglés y Español...mayormente en Español.”*

Some participants argued that there is a tendency to switch from English to Spanish, described by them as a translation. In other words, the teacher presents

L2 structures and suddenly changes to L1 instruction. Besides, the students are required to switch as they are required to provide a literal translation of questions orally. Though, Kavaliauskienė (2010) indicates that switching is important for the development of interlanguage in the classroom, but it is probable that students will often think in their L1, even at an advanced level. It implies that students use to rely on their mother tongue as they are used to switch by first in L1 and look for an equivalent in L2. Therefore, switching to Spanish is another technique to check understanding of a determined input and takes elements of translation. Conversely, in the following category is emphasized the use of English as it is involved into translation practices within the classroom.

### **5.2.2 Role of translation in the practices of the classroom**

The practice of English is highly influenced by translation procedures as indicated by many of the participants. Consequently, in the Pueblo Rico's institution translating became a classroom routine as mentioned by the participants, and even represents a frequently practiced exercise in those students who train English with personal purposes. Thus, the students' tendency to translate comes from the models adopted in class as the teacher also practices it in her explanations.

**S10Q1:** *“La profesora entra al salón, nos saluda en Inglés, nosotros le respondemos adecuadamente en Inglés...y después vamos a la práctica que ya sería traducir algún tema que coloque escrito en el tablero...”*

**O1P2:** *La profesora escribe ejemplos en inglés en el tablero y posteriormente dice su traducción literal en Español...*

Translation is used as another component in the structure of the classes. In addition, this is employed as another strategy for practicing English. In Stoddart

(2000) words, it is unavoidable for language students to translate into L1 as it is an inevitable process in learning a second language. Besides, as argued by the students, translation is achieved through the presentation of written forms on the whiteboard or a musical video with lyrics in order to translate. It denotes that translation is followed as a formal procedure within the structure of some classes. Thus, the use of English is involved in translation procedures, and some participants feel comfortable with translating, especially in their personal practices as evident in the following sample.

**S10Q9:** *“Yo lo uso...si me gusta mucho practicarlo, estudiarlo fuera de clases sin necesidad del profesor, clases aparte...yo lo practico buscando palabras desconocidas que yo nunca haya visto y buscándolas en un diccionario o traduciéndolas en un computador.”*

**S10Q8:** *“Em...a mí sí me gusta mucho el Inglés y...como entiendo poco me gusta ver una frase en Inglés e intentar traducirla sin necesidad del diccionario...”*

Some students find translation useful and helpful, and even argue their preference to use this approach in their personal practices. This is because of the facility to access to a dictionary, internet, or available digital translators for the computers. As Atkinson (1987) denotes, translation performances use to be one of the favored learning strategies in second language learners. For that reason, translation practices reflect autonomy in the fact that the participants do it by will; as in the case of Student 10, who performs it without a previous teacher request, or as a goal in terms of knowledge in English. Thus, some participants consider translation as a way of understanding the meaning of words, as founded in the



lyrics of songs. However, the following sample caught our attention in the fact that translation seems a mechanical procedure rather than a communicative skill.

**S11Q7:** *“Pues yo tengo buen conocimiento en el Inglés pero solamente para traducir, mas no para hablarlo.”*

As translation is one of the models achieved in the classroom, Student 11 considered his vocabulary in English one strong aspect for translation but not for verbal communication. In consideration, Murcia (2001) argues that in grammar translation there is little use of L2 for communication, and consequently, the result ends in the student's inability to use language for communication purposes. In spite of this, Student 11 represents one of those cases where knowledge in meaning of words has been adopted isolated from communication formal structures. Thus, when the practice of English has been through translation, speaking is highly reduced, and even null. Thus, the Student 11 statement indicates that even when translation is frequently used, it is limited and do not support the improvement of certain skills, in this case, speaking.

### **5.3. Academic community's perceptions towards language teaching**

In terms of language teaching, the academic community perceptions denote similar concepts as well as several contradictions. In this way, the finding is divided into two categories, where the first deals with the students insights, which are related with their personal practices and language habits. On the other hand, the second category is related with the perceptions from the teacher and coordinator,

which deal with the aspects they take into account in aspects as design of classes, application of standards, as well as use of materials and the importance they provide to them.

### **5.3.1. Students' perspectives of the practice of English**

Students' perceptions towards the learning of English in Pueblo Rico indicate several aspects to consider. To begin with, some participants consider that English sessions rely on repetitive materials and topics, revealing low motivation levels to achieve a satisfactory practice of English. In consideration, some factors as external pressure or emotional barriers influences on the students low proficiency, together with external factors as number of students in the classroom, misbehavior, or students lack of practice.

**S7Q3:** *“Pues en estos momentos las clases para mi han sido normales por lo que siempre...como le digo...siempre han sido los mismos temas con los mismos materiales y sí, con las mismas cosas y todo.”*

**S8Q4:** *“...ósea...no se quede como en el mismo tema sino que cambie de temas.”*

Student 7 is a specific case who emphasizes on an overemployment regarding the development of English classes. In fact, the participant considers that most of the classes are supplied with overused materials and practices, adding that each class seems to achieve the same topics. Furthermore, student 8 agrees by suggesting achieving a new topic rather than taking the same topic again. According to Lightbown & Spada (2008), lessons developed through the constant repetition of routines, patterns, and formats influence on decreasing motivation and reinforcing boredom student's perceptions towards the class. In this way,

participants confirm that the structure of the classes is repetitive in terms of materials and topics. However, Student 7 looks at learning a foreign language as a requirement as evidenced in the following answers:

**S7Q3:** *“Pues pa’ mi la clase de Inglés es buena porque digamos que uno sale del colegio y uno va a estudiar una carrera, siempre va a necesitar otro idioma...entonces lo mejor que yo...que cada estudiante debe recibir así no le guste es que cada periodo, cada que una persona entienda un tema pasar de ese tema a otro pa’ que el aprendizaje sea mejor.”*

**S3Q3:** (question about qualities of the class) *“el traductor...bueno traducir...aprendernos los examenes.”*

In Student 7 words, he denotes learning a foreign language as important because it is mandatory to study a professional program, even if the student does not have the will to accomplish it. On the other hand, Student 3 illustrates those cases where the learner studies for a required grade or test. As Lightbown & Spada (2008) argue, those students who are exposed to a language by external pressure and not by personal commitment, their internal motivation will decrease and their negative attitudes to learn a language will increase. It implies that both cases look at English classes as an institutional requirement, but not necessarily as a personal goal, and consequently, a low proficiency in English will take place as shown below.

**S9Q7:** *“Noo pésimo, definitivamente pésimo...porque no entiendo, entonces no se hablarlo y cuando me hablan sí que menos, queda uno en las mismas.”*

**S12Q7:** *“No porque...pues yo no sé...eso como que no me entra a mi...no.”*

As described in the sample above, some participants consider their level of English as low. In addition, Student 9 explains that his level of proficiency in English is low

because he does not understand and has not developed any listening or speaking ability. In addition, Student 12 finds learning English as a difficult aim, and evidences a personal predisposition to believe that she is not able to develop any appropriate English level. Regarding affective factors in language learning, Du (2009) considers that learners with a positive attitude towards L2 learning achieve an easier and rapid progress in contrast to those who have a negative perspective and learn slower. Thus, the participants evidence aspects from affective filter or low motivation in both cases as they are unwilling to improve their perceptions. Conversely, the participants also expressed the reasons they consider affects their low proficiency in the following sample:

**S12Q4:** *“... algunas veces no le entendemos (al profesor de Inglés) y ya...o por los números de alumnos que habemos en ese salón pues porque somos pues el grupo más numeroso del colegio, pues por la recocha, puede ser que no le entendemos o no le escuchamos...”*

**S9Q3:** *“...no he reforzado bien el inglés...de pronto los cantos y así que más o menos me guíe porque más o menos uno sabe, pero ya de resto se coloca como complicada la cosa.”*

The sample suggests that even when the participants expressed their indisposition to speak in English, they are aware of certain involved factors that influences in this fact. In the Student 12 case, the number of students and misbehavior factors are associated as influential in the low proficiency of English. On the other hand, Student 9 makes the relation with lack of practice or personal reinforcement outside the classroom. Consequently, the participants have developed a low proficiency because of lack of practice of English, and external factors as the classroom environment. In addition, it decreases the motivation of

those students who look at learning a language as something frustrating, and as indicated by O'Sullivan (2008), unmotivated students are not enough involved, and consequently, they are not able to develop their language skills to potential. This argument is emphasized in the following excerpt.

**S7Q9:** *“Siempre que hacemos las tareas, solo lo practicamos así, así en las clases y ya y después ya olvidamos lo que vimos en clase.”*

**S9Q9:** *“No, yo no...no, no practico el inglés. En clase, cuando toca porque toca, sino no, no lo practico.”*

The collected data indicates that L2 is used in class time exclusively. As described by the participants, they do not practice their English if it is not for academic purposes. According to MacLeod & Larsson (2009), a reason for avoiding L2 practice outside the classroom is when students are not aware and even find useless the input received in class into their daily life. Consequently, when students' main reason to study is the acquisition of grades as in Student 7 case, and it is not given by motivation to learn a language, then the practice of English for other purposes is void. In contrast, the following sample reveals those participants who practice their English outside the classroom.

**S11Q9:** *“Muchas veces sí, otras veces eh... acurro al internet, pongo videos o escucho música en Inglés que es más fácil para uno aprenderlo y traducirlo.”*

**S11Q8:** *“Sí, lo usamos en el SENA en las horas de la tarde porque nosotros estamos estudiando inglés en Técnico Ambiental.”*

Some participants also indicated their personal use of English outside the classroom. In the case of Student 11, his personal practice of English is through the listening of songs to learn its lyrics and translate them. Conversely, Student 11

uses English for an alternative academic context described as Environmental Engineering. In terms of practicing a second language, Gardner & Lambert (cited by Lightbown & Spada, 2008) indicates two categories of motivation which are integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to learning for personal growth, and instrumental refers to learning for practical goals. Thus, Student 11 is a case where both categories are current, and indicates a positive perspective towards learning a second language. Consequently, as indicated by the authors, Student 11 is composed from both types of motivation, and for that reason there is autonomy to learn, contrary to the previously mentioned students.

### **5.3.2. Teacher and coordinator perspectives of language teaching**

In an academic community, it is evident the variety in techniques in order to support the practices of English. In the case of Pueblo Rico, the teacher achieves the preparation of classes through a mixture of some teaching methods. Moreover, the coordinator relates the low proficiency of English in students with the lack of didactic material. Nevertheless, it is perceived a lack of regulation in the English teaching area as the teacher and coordinator perspectives are quite contradictory to each other, and the coordinator refers to aspects in process of restructuration. The following samples deal with different perspectives of both teacher and coordinator concerning the language teaching in Pueblo Rico.

**C1Q9.** *¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el nivel académico en el Área de Inglés su colegio?*

*Regular. Carencia de material didáctico. El material se adquirió finalizando el año 2011*

Regarding the academic level of English in the institution, the teacher and coordinator consider that students have an average level. Consistently, the coordinator explained that it is because of lack of educational material. Therefore, Crawford (2002) determines that materials enable both teacher and students to learn further from verbal and non-verbal communication. In other words, the use of materials supports a more integral part of meaning that learners are required to accomplish. In addition, Richards & Rodgers (2001) agree that instructional materials outline the achievement of learning objectives. Consequently, the use of materials attracts the students' attention and interest in the classroom, but as it was not available in Pueblo Rico until the end of 2011, this is the reason about the students' level in English according to the coordinator. However, the teacher indicated that the material she has been using is a textbook, as shown in the next sample:

**T1D14:** *¿Los estudiantes tienen texto guía?*

*“Sí. Face 2 Face básico, intermedio.”*

**T1D5:** *¿Qué tipo de libros consulta usted para la preparación de sus clases?*

*“Face 2 face, English discovery, Ruffus Discovery, etc.”*

**S2Q2:** *“Un librito llamado Leído de Inglés...”*

As denoted by the teacher, a textbook is used by students, and also is a tool for class preparations. In addition, some students mentioned an additional textbook to those mentioned by the teacher. Crawford (2002) determines that textbooks are a structuring tool as they provide predictability regarding the input. However

Crawford also indicates some disadvantages as some textbooks fail to present realistic language models, are limited to contextualize language activities, and even present inappropriate cultural understanding. Conversely, it suggests that it is not enough to use a textbook, but also to adapt and support its limitations with other resources. Something that caught our attention was the fact that the coordinator stated that new material was acquired at the end of 2011, but still is unidentified for her as stated in the next excerpt:

**C1Q7.** *¿la institución ha adquirido bibliografía en inglés?*

*“Sí... No conozco todavía el material de inglés adquirido por la institución finalizando el año 2011.”*

**C1Q14.** *¿Cuál método utiliza el profesor de inglés en sus clases?*

*“Para el año 2012 se está mejorando la metodología con la aplicación de material didáctico.”*

As evidenced in the coordinator argument, institutional English material was acquired, but still was unknown for her. On the other hand, the coordinator concept regarding the teacher's methodology in class reveals a partial awareness about its nature, particularly in the answer nature towards an objective question. As stated by Cardenas (cited in Sanchez & Obando, 2008), institutions in Colombia welcome teaching of English, but concerns are increasing because of lack of clarity regarding the way to optimize the language teaching conditions to achieve educational goals. Consequently, the data suggests that the regulation for English classes is still in reinforcement, and the English sessions are under the teacher's main consent. On the other hand, the teacher considers three methods within the implementation of her classes as mentioned in the following excerpt.



**T1D9.** *Cuál de los siguientes métodos utiliza usted en sus clases?*

*“Método de Lectura, Método Audiovisual, Método Audio lingual.”*

**T1D6.** *Habilidades en que hace mayor énfasis en sus clases, enumere en orden de importancia.*

*“Listening 3 Reading 4.”*

*“Speaking 2 Writing 1.”*

According to the teacher, reading, audiovisual, and audio lingual are methods implemented in the classroom. In this way, the most emphasized skills are writing and speaking. Consequently, the classroom is based in a mixture of audio lingual and reading approaches as it involve a strong emphasis on writing and speaking as described by the teacher. In spite of this, the teacher argues that her class planning is based on MEN standards as the following sample states.

**T1D10.** *Para elaborar su programa de inglés, ¿se basa usted en los Estándares de enseñanza del inglés del Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN)?*

*Sí, empleando los estándares o lineamientos curriculares que la ley (MEN) ha establecido.”*

**CQ15.** *¿Para elaborar el programa de inglés, se basa el profesor en los Estándares de enseñanza del inglés, del Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN)?*

*“ Sí, Pero utilizando niveles bajos.”*

Along some answers provided by the teacher, the use of MEN standards are confirmed, but the nature regarding the way they are implemented are still inconclusive. In the same way, the coordinator answer confirms the implementation

of MEN standards, but also describes that they are fulfilled in low levels. Though, a reference to a low level use of standards involves a low emphasis on English within the institution. As stated by Sanchez & Obando (2008), the standards implementation in Colombia needs to be addressed, especially when there are institutions where the English schedule is less than four hours, and even seems not to exist. Consequently, implementation of standards is questionable in terms of the English area in Pueblo Rico.

In Pueblo Rico we could gather several data about the different practices in terms of language teaching. We first started by analyzing different teaching language procedures which were widely connected with learner-centered aspects and strategies to contextualize knowledge as it was recycling of previous knowledge and materials. On the other hand, it was also analyzed aspects related with the role of the languages, and the Pueblo Rico academic community's perceptions related to all the aspects previously mentioned. Subsequently, the next section is related with all the aspects which could not be covered in this study, and also those facets in which it is possible to make further research or educational improvements.

## **6. Research and pedagogical implications**

In consideration with the English practices in the institution, it is necessary to consider external factors as the number of groups and number of teachers. For instance, we noticed that there was only one teacher to teach to 11 grades. In addition, the huge number of students a group has become a difficulty for the teacher in terms of classroom management. In this way, it is necessary to consider these environmental factors as they affect the learning development and attention of the students.

As there is only one teacher in the institution, it implicates each group to have less than four hours of English per week. Respectively, it is possible to miss some sessions because of other academic activities or holidays. Consequently, it is necessary to consider strategies in order to intensify or recover missed sessions because of other activities, and also to have more teachers in order to include more hours of English in the schedule as possible. When there is a long distance of time between the English sessions, then it hinders the students learning process, especially when there are no spaces to practice English in our foreign language learning context.

To follow with, the current study diagnoses the strategies implemented in Pueblo Rico in the practice of English. As it was not possible to have access to the curriculum during this study, local research on the curriculum development of the town will determine what educational purposes the institution has in order to teach English, and which factors affects the achievement of these objectives if they are

present. In addition, further research will determine how the curriculum influences on the syllabi of the teachers, or if the syllabi are developed according to the teachers personal believes.

In terms of standards, during the collection of data in the town we realized how much it is required to regulate its applicability. Like this, it is necessary to inform the teachers and institutions about the current guidelines to follow. In other words, to inform about the current basic standards of competences in English, which provides a more precise guide for English teachers, and which is confused with other general curriculum guidelines.

Regarding the management of the English area in Pueblo Rico and other involved towns during the research, it is necessary to consider the implementation of standards according to the institutional resources. Thus, we consider that further exploration is required in order to consider the institutional equipment each town has and its limitations. In other words, some standards would imply the use of certain material and not being available in the institution. Besides, not all the institutions have the same resources as in Pueblo Rico and vice versa.

About the classroom structures, we noticed that they present strong characteristics as contextualization and some learner-centered aspects implemented in class. However, the use of Spanish is vast in comparison with the use of English, which is limited in terms of communication. For that reason, we consider that it is necessary to consider certain activities where the students get involved to think in English and avoid the use of Spanish as a strategy to learn L2.

In accordance with the participants' arguments and observations, there are skillful learners in practices as the grammar-translation, but they present limitations to perform verbal communication. Consequently, the point is that there are motivated students to achieve a proper management of English, but the class activities are not properly focused. Therefore, it is necessary to determine which activities can integrate the four skills, especially when approaches as the grammar-translation present limitations in certain skills as the speaking.

Further study about the interests or students' needs will provide meaningful information about the appropriate practices to achieve successful English fluency. In other words, it is necessary to analyze the students profile and PEI from the institution in order to determine if the institutional aims are being achieved. For instance, if an institution PEI is centered on software design, then the topics of the classes would be more related with this subject.

## **7. Limitations of the study**

During the implementation of the study, some specific factors intervened during the collection of data. To begin with, little cooperation of some institutions hindered the data collection time as they were supposed to allow the researchers to gather information. On the other hand, the questionnaire of the teacher and coordinator were not completely answered, access to curriculum was not possible, and inevitable institutional time factors as academic meetings did not permit to collect further information.

In theoretical limitations, we had as a basis the purpose of the Ordenanza policy, but information about regional studies was limited as research in the area of English in Risaralda is in a very early stage. Thus, we based on other strong theoretical foundations centered on teaching and learning processes, but widely considering what type of information was necessary, or what type of information had to be omitted during the process. In other words, the entire theoretical framework was relevant, but we had to decide what information to preserve, what information to add, and what information to remove.

Regarding methodological limitations, aspects as the time to make observations was not sufficient. As the instruments to collect data were questionnaires, interviews, and class observations, we collected all the information. However, we consider that more observations would have provided a more accurate perspective about the procedures of the class. In addition, attitudinal

factors would have an influence on the teacher and students behavior when being observed.

If we found that some information was partial or described in a very general way, it was because of the participant predisposition or availability to provide information at the time they were asked, and not because of the data collection instruments. In the case of students' interviews, we first familiarized the students with the questions, and then we further explained them what type of information the questions were intended for.

Other limitations of the study were related with analytical procedures. After the coding of the information, our potential categories were too similar at the beginning, and sometimes the gathered interviews revealed more general perspectives than specific situations. Moreover, some questionnaires presented partial information, and it was difficult to infer what the participant was trying to denote. Thus, the main limitation was the partial information provided by some participants, and at the same time, avoiding ambiguities or subjective interpretations.

## **8. Conclusions**

The methodology and procedures to teach English in Pueblo Rico is varied and presents learner-centered aspects in a significant way. As follows, correction of mistakes is in charge of the teacher and the students, together with clear stimulation to work cooperatively. In terms of approaches, translation is widely employed in the classroom, from which students are not able to develop a proper speaking skill.

To start with the role of languages in the classroom, Spanish is the most used language in the English classes. As stated by some students, the use of Spanish in the classroom takes place through teacher's giving of instructions, explanation of input, attention callings, and correction of mistakes. On the other hand, the use of English is present through written forms, repetition of words, and some literal translation provided by the teacher. In spite of this, some participants explained that the teacher is the only user of English, and the students communicate in Spanish most of the time.

In terms of institutional resources, the materials in Pueblo Rico are limited, but they are properly used to engage the students with the learning of pronunciation. Thus, participation in the class is highly supported with activities as singing. On the other hand, materials are used in order to contextualize the input with previous knowledge from the students, as evidenced at the moment of using objects of the students' environment in order to provide examples.



The applicability of standards in Pueblo Rico requires to be strengthened. All the content of the class is in charge of the teacher, which argues its basis on the Lineamientos Curriculares (curriculum guidelines), but not on the Basic Standards in Foreign Languages (*Formar en Lenguas Extranjeras: El Reto!*). On the other hand, the academic coordination reveals that standards are applied in a low level, and even evidence a lack of knowledge regarding the textbooks acquired at the end of 2011.

The coordinator considers that the English level of the students is regular because of lack of “didactic materials”. However, the teacher uses textbooks within the classroom, together with materials as the video beam and audio files. Though, the management on the English area is more represented in the teacher performance than the academic coordination.

Regarding some students’ arguments, it is perceived a negative predisposition to learn English because of low motivation and constant repetition of the same topics. In addition, some students contemplate the practice of English as a mandatory requirement of the class, and for that reason, the practice outside the classroom time is null. However, some students also described their use of English for personal purposes as the translation of songs with the use of internet, and also to study Environmental Technology from SENA.

In consideration, it is possible to stimulate the learners to practice outside the classroom, but the way to achieve this has not been properly emphasized. For

that reason, it is necessary to consider the wide variety of learners within a classroom in order to make decisions.

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## Appendix 1

### Consent letter



Universidad  
Tecnológica  
de Pereira



Licenciatura en  
Lengua  
Inglesa  
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira



GOBERNACIÓN DE RISARALDA  
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SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN

#### CIRCULAR No. 099

Pereira, 29 de Noviembre de 2011

**PARA:** DIRECTIVOS INSTITUCIONES EDUCATIVAS DE LOS 12 MUNICIPIOS  
NO CERTIFICADOS

**ASUNTO:** PROYECTO "EL ESTADO DEL ARTE DE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS  
EN LAS INSTITUCIONES EDUCATIVAS PÚBLICAS DE RISARALDA"

Dentro de las exigencias de la modernidad esta el manejo de un idioma común que le permita a los ciudadanos acceder a la información de un mundo globalizado. En Colombia según información del ICFES en el año 2004, el 99% de los estudiantes eligieron el inglés en las Pruebas Pre-SABER 11, razón por la cual las instituciones educativas han optado por la enseñanza de este idioma como segunda lengua.

Es por ello que la Secretaría de Educación Departamental y la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira a través de la Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, han emprendido acciones para el fortalecimiento del inglés como segundo lengua.

Por tal razón se requiere de su colaboración y disposición, de acuerdo al compromiso firmado por ustedes en la jornada de Asistencia Técnica Integral, realizada el pasado mes de Septiembre/2011 en las instalaciones de Villa Mónaco, para dar inicio en la primera parte de recolección de información, la cual estará a cargo de un grupo de estudiantes de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, de la licenciatura referida la referencia, quienes harán presencia en las instituciones durante los días 1 y 2 de diciembre del presente año. En el primer trimestre del año 2012 se continuará con el proceso de recolección de información

Anexo relación de las Instituciones Educativas que participaran en el proyecto y los estudiantes de la UTP que realizarán esta actividad en cada institución.

Cordial Saludo.

  
**PAULA ANDREA DÁVILA CAÑAS**  
Secretaría de Educación Departamental

**ENRIQUE ARIAS CASTAÑO**  
Director Departamento de Humanidades e Idiomas  
Coordinador licenciatura en lengua inglesa  
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

 Proyecto: Hilduara Ospina Franco

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire format



Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira –Secretaría de Educación Departamental  
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa  
Grupo de Investigación en Lingüística Aplicada  
Cuestionario Profesor de Inglés



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Este cuestionario pertenece al proyecto “el estado del arte de la enseñanza del inglés en Risaralda”. Les solicitamos leer cuidadosamente cada una de las afirmaciones y contestar las preguntas en una forma objetiva y con la mayor veracidad del caso. La información aquí consignada es de carácter investigativo y es confidencial del grupo de investigación.

#### OBJETIVO

Caracterizar el estado del arte de la enseñanza del inglés en el Departamento de Risaralda en instituciones públicas.

#### INFORMACIÓN ACADÉMICA

##### 1. Estudios realizados

NIVEL	LUGAR	FECHA	TITULO
Bachillerato	_____	_____	_____
Pregrado	_____	_____	_____
Postgrado	_____	_____	_____

#### EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL

2. Colegio donde labora \_\_\_\_\_  
Público \_\_\_\_\_ Dedicación: Medio Tiempo \_\_\_\_\_ Tiempo Completo \_\_\_\_\_ Por horas \_\_\_\_\_
3. Años de experiencia de trabajo:  
Entre 1 y 4 años \_\_\_\_\_ Entre 5 y 10 años \_\_\_\_\_ Más de 10 años \_\_\_\_\_

#### CAPACITACIÓN Y ACTUALIZACIÓN

4. Cursos de capacitación recibida (Favor indicar los cursos tomados en los últimos cinco años)

NOMBRE CURSO	DURACIÓN	FECHA	ENTIDAD QUE LO REALIZÓ
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

5. ¿Ha mantenido usted contacto con la Universidad después de haber egresado?

SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ En qué forma?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿Ha adquirido usted últimamente bibliografía sobre la metodología de la enseñanza del inglés? SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

AUTOR	TITULO	AÑO
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



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7. ¿Ha adquirido bibliografía en inglés?

SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

AUTOR	TITULO	AÑO
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

8. ¿En los últimos cinco (5) años ha participado en seminarios o congresos del área?

SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuáles?

TITULO DEL EVENTO	ENTIDAD ORGANIZADORA	FECHA
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

8. ¿Pertenece Usted y/o es socio activo (socio actual) de alguna Asociación Académica?

SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ ¿CUÁL(ES)?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. ¿Qué tipo de capacitación considera usted que debe recibir como docente en ejercicio?  
Especifique

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10.Cuál es su opinión sobre el nivel académico en el Área de Inglés su colegio?

Pésimo \_\_\_\_\_ Malo \_\_\_\_\_ Regular \_\_\_\_\_ Bueno \_\_\_\_\_ Excelente \_\_\_\_\_

¿Por qué?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. ¿En qué nivel promedio se ubicaron los estudiantes del grado once en las pruebas de inglés del ICFES del año pasado?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el examen de inglés del ICFES?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Mencione los problemas más frecuentes y críticos que usted actualmente enfrenta en la enseñanza y en el aprendizaje del inglés en Bachillerato. Enumérelos en orden de importancia según el grado de seriedad o gravedad.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





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### Planeación de clase

14. ¿Los estudiantes tienen texto guía? SI \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_  
Si la respuesta es SI indique el texto que usan los estudiantes.

TÍTULO DEL TEXTO EDITORIAL AÑO

¿Si la respuesta es NO, que tipo de materiales utiliza?

5. ¿Qué tipo de libros consulta usted para la preparación de sus clases? ¿Señale en orden de importancia para usted?

AUTOR	AÑO	TÍTULO
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. Habilidades en que hace mayor énfasis en sus clases, enumere en orden de importancia.

Listening _____	Reading _____
Speaking _____	Writing _____

7. ¿Qué aspectos tiene en cuenta para diseñar sus clases?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. ¿Qué estrategias usa para preparar su clase?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 9.Cuál de los siguientes métodos utiliza usted en sus clases?

Método de Gramática y Traducción. _____	Suggestopedia _____
Método de Series _____	Enfoque Comunitario _____
Método Directo _____	Enfoque Natural _____
Método de Lectura _____	Método Ecléctico _____
Método Audiovisual _____	"Silent Way" _____
Método Audio lingual _____	Enfoque Cognitivo _____
Método de Aprendizaje de Lenguas en comunidad _____	Enfoque Comunicativo _____
Método de Respuesta Física Total (TPR) _____	
¿Otros? ¿Cuáles? _____	
No sabe _____	



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10. Para elaborar su programa de inglés, ¿se basa usted en los Estándares de enseñanza del inglés del Ministerio de Educación Nacional? (MEN)? SI\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_

¿Cómo? \_\_\_\_\_

Si no se basa en los estándares del MEN, ¿elabora usted el programa de inglés?

Si \_\_\_ No\_\_\_ ¿cómo lo hace?

¿Con base en un texto? \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuál? \_\_\_\_\_

¿Según sus propios criterios? \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuáles? \_\_\_\_\_

¿Otros? \_\_\_\_\_ Especifique \_\_\_\_\_

11. De los siguientes objetivos señale en orden de importancia (1-2-3-4-5,etc) los planteados por usted en su programa.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Comprender correctamente la lengua hablada.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Entender un texto escuchado, sobre un tema con el cual este familiarizado.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hablar el idioma con corrección y seguridad.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Participar en conversaciones sencillas sobre los temas estudiados  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Escribir el idioma con corrección y seguridad  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Leer y traducir con precisión el material escrito en Inglés, de manera comprensiva analítica y crítica.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Leer comprensivamente con el fin de captar el sentido general de un texto y extraer la información específica.

Otros ¿Cuáles? \_\_\_\_\_

#### MEJORAMIENTO ACADEMICO

10. ¿Practica usted la lengua extranjera? SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ ¿En qué forma?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. ¿Ha presentado usted alguna vez algún examen de inglés, para medir su nivel de competencia en lengua extranjera?

SI\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

NOMBRE	AÑO	PUNTAJE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

12. Cómo considera su nivel de Inglés en este momento?

Bajo	_____	Bueno	_____
Regular	_____	Excelente	_____

Agradecemos de antemano su colaboración y su autorización para ser participante en el proyecto

## Appendix 3

### *Observation format*



Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira  
Proyecto Estado del Arte de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Risaralda  
Formato de Observación

Municipio:

Colegio:

Factores Observados	Descripción	Comentarios
Plan de Clase y objetivo		
Estrategias de enseñanza o actividades		
Uso de la lengua extranjera		
Rol de la lengua materna		
Material y Recurso		
Patrones de interacción		
Setting & classroom layout		
Teacher & Students role		

## Appendix 4

### *Interview*

#### Protocolo de entrevista

El propósito de esta entrevista es recoger información acerca de las experiencias de la Enseñanza del inglés dentro de su Institución. Este es un instrumento de recopilación de información para el trabajo de investigación: Estado del arte de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Colegios Públicos de Risaralda

Apreciamos su colaboración en este ejercicio. Si en cualquier momento usted siente que tiene alguna duda acerca de las preguntas, por favor no se abstenga de preguntar. Estaremos encantados de aclarar cualquier duda que usted pueda tener.

1. Nos gustaría que nos contara acerca de la clase de inglés correspondiente a su grado.

- ¿Describa una clase de inglés de su grado?
  - ¿cuál sería el orden
- ¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en clase?
- 

3. Recordando el trabajo realizado por los docentes en las clases de inglés, describamos algunos aspectos de las prácticas (no es evaluarlos, es que me describas sus cualidades y aspectos por mejorar)

- ¿Cuales crees que son las mayores cualidades de la clase?
- ¿qué aspectos mejoraría de la clase?
- ¿Qué sugerencias le haría a la clase?
- 

4. Hablemos de su aprendizaje del inglés

- ¿Cuál es la lengua usada en clase?
- ¿Cómo piensa que es su conocimiento del inglés?
- ¿Cómo referencia su conocimiento, dónde la usa?
- ¿Cómo práctica el inglés? Usa lo visto en clase?